

or physical condition they know nothing, (iii) to protect the privacy of the parties to the adoption, and (iv) to discourage unlawful trafficking in minors and other unlawful placement activities.

(c) In construing this Chapter, the needs, interests, and rights of minor adoptees are primary. Any conflict between the interests of a minor adoptee and those of an adult shall be resolved in favor of the minor.

(d) This Chapter shall be liberally construed and applied to promote its underlying purposes and policies.

"§ 48-1-101. Definitions.

In this Chapter, the following definitions apply:

- (1) 'Adoptee' means an individual who is adopted, is placed for adoption, or is the subject of a petition for adoption properly filed with the court.
- (2) 'Adoption' means the creation by law of the relationship of parent and child between two individuals.
- (3) 'Adult' means an individual who has attained 18 years of age, or if under the age of 18, is either married or has been emancipated under the applicable State law.
- (3a) 'Adoption facilitator' means an individual or a nonprofit entity that assists biological parents in locating and evaluating prospective adoptive parents without charge.
- (4) 'Agency' means a public or private association, corporation, institution, or other person or entity that is licensed or otherwise authorized by the law of the jurisdiction where it operates to place minors for adoption. 'Agency' also means a county department of social services in this State.
- (5) 'Child' means a son or daughter, whether by birth or adoption.
- (6) 'Department' means the North Carolina Department of Human Resources.
- (7) 'Division' means the Division of Social Services of the Department.
- (8) 'Guardian' means an individual, other than a parent, appointed by a clerk of court in North Carolina to exercise all of the powers conferred by G.S. 35A-1241; and also means an individual, other than a parent, appointed in another jurisdiction according to the law of that jurisdiction who has the power to consent to adoption under the law of that jurisdiction.
- (9) 'Legal custody' of an individual means the general right to exercise continuing care of and control over the individual as authorized by law, with or without a court order, and:
 - a. Includes the right and the duty to protect, care for, educate, and discipline the individual;
 - b. Includes the right and the duty to provide the individual with food, shelter, clothing, and medical care; and
 - c. May include the right to have physical custody of the individual.
- (10) 'Minor' means an individual under 18 years of age who is not an adult.